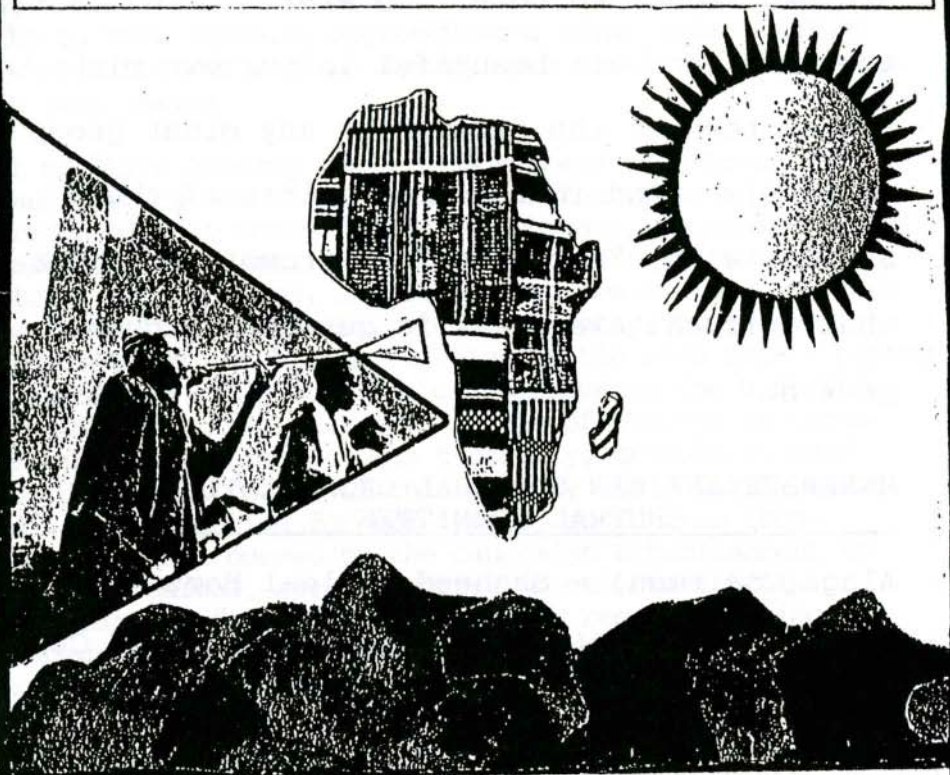


HARAMBEE FLAME



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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Afrikans are beautiful in our own right, rather than at the expense of any other group of people. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural awareness is germane to human growth.

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Alaga(Chairman) - Shaheed Khaleel Hamza

Eso/Alakoso Asha(Sgt.-at-Arms/Chairman of Cultural Affairs Committee) -
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COMMENTARY

Just suppose, for a moment, there were such a thing as "tree history month" and people all over the U.S. were paying tribute to the tree. And suppose these celebrants of tree history month focused only on the leaves that a tree produces. Wouldn't we suspect some short-sightedness, at best, on the part of these celebrants and flat-out insanity, at worst? We'd ask: "What about twigs, branches, bark, trunk, roots, and the other components that comprise what a tree is?" We'd wonder how it were possible for folks to have anything approaching a clear understanding of what a tree is without having some knowledge about more than just leaves.

Aint no "tree history month." But there is a so-called "black history month"--alternately referred to as "African American history month." During February, we observe this "black"/"African American" history of ours in community centers, in our homes, and elsewhere; see and hear history moments on t.v. and radio, etc. Typically, these observances of our history involve little more than a paying of tribute to individual African persons in the U.S. who have achieved relatively high levels of success in Caucasian-run institutions. Less typically, tribute is paid to individual Africans in this country who actually spent their lives fighting for **our** rights, so long as these Africans aren't deemed by the Caucasian Establishment to have been radical, revolutionary, or otherwise truly threatening to "the system," in their respective times. For example, while we are commonly reminded of Martin Luther King or, less commonly, of Frederick Douglass, we almost never hear of David Walker or Martin Delaney. And since Omowale(Malcolm X) is deemed by the Caucasian Establishment to have been radical and threatening, but too widely admired by us to be ignored, when we do get some Omowale, we get a "rehabilitated"/"cleaned up" version.

But even if "black"/"African American" history month exposed us to information on **all** conceivable facets of the history of our people in this country, it would still only be equivalent to a tribute to and study of **leaves** by those who would celebrate the history of the **tree**. And like the tree, we and our history have many facets, many compo-

nents. We are **African** people. Our roots are not in the U.S. but in the continent of Africa. We can't even understand how we came to be here in the first place unless we know about and understand what our lives were like while we were yet at home. We can't understand why our present situation in this country is as it is without knowing about and understanding the values and traditions we had before the Middle Passage and the process by which those values and traditions were destroyed and/or altered through the institution of slavery and other instruments of the European-supremacist ideology. And we can't have a sufficient basis for either an assessment of our progress, or lack of it, here or for aspirations for our future without having a knowledge of and appreciation for what we were able to accomplish prior to the first European setting foot on the soil of our Motherland.

Nothing exists in isolation but in connection with and as a part of other things. And when we look at things, situations, people, whatever as if they existed in isolation, we get distorted and misleading views of them. An African person living in this country at this time, who has little or no knowledge of our history prior to chattel slavery, may have a fatalistic mentality by which he or she believes that our oppression is "the way it's always been and always will be." Such a Brother or Sister doesn't seek to help us construct a future but lives from day to day, maybe taking foolish and dangerous risks to his or her life and/or the lives of others. An African person who has little or no knowledge of our ancestors' designs and constructions of the pyramids of Kemet (ancient "Egypt") or the temples and other structures of the Great Zimbabwe may view the science of engineering as beyond his or her capabilities, or the capabilities of any African people. An African person who has little or no knowledge of the origins of the word and concept of "nigger" may see the term as "only a word," readily use it in reference to him or her self and his or her people, and unknowingly intensify the psychic damage already done to him or her by European-supremacist culture and institutions.

In this **African** History edition of the HARAMBEE FLAME, we present an expanded version of "Back In Time" and hope that you will find it both informative and stimulating.

BACK IN TIME

Cpl. David Fagen: A Real Role Model

From 1899 to 1902, approximately 70,000 U.S. troops fought to end the Filipino independence movement and bring the islands under U.S. control...

The blatant contradiction between U.S. [words] and U.S. actions became increasingly apparent to the Black soldiers (the 9th and 10th regular Army cavalry regiments, 24th and 25th regular Army infantry regiments, and two regiments of Black volunteers).

The Filipinos they were fighting never let them forget that contradiction, and their awareness of it was reinforced daily by discrimination from white Americans.

"I was struck by a question a little (Filipino)boy asked me," wrote one of the soldiers, "which ran about this way: 'Why does the American Negro come..to fight us when we are as much a friend to him and have not done anything to him. He is all the same as me and me all the same as you. Why don't you fight those people in America who burn Negroes, that make a beast of you?'"...

The leader of the Filipino liberation movement, Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, wrote a placard appealing to Black soldiers. Titled "To the Colored American Soldier," it declared:

"It is without honor that you are spilling your costly blood. Your masters have thrown you into the most iniquitous fight with double purpose--to make you the instrument of their ambition and also your hard work will soon make the extinction of your race. Your friends, the Filipinos, give you this good warning. You must consider your situation and your history, and take charge that the blood of..Sam Hose(a Black man burned alive in Newman, Ga. in 1899)..proclaims vengeance."

Several Black soldiers responded to the racial policies and practices of the United States by defecting to the

Filipinos. They were given officer commissions in Aguinaldo's resistance movement. The most famous of the Black soldiers who fought with the Filipino freedom fighters was Cpl. David Fagen of the 24th. Infantry...

...on Nov. 17, 1899, Fagen defected from the U.S. Army, assisted "by an 'insurrecto' officer who had a horse waiting for him near the company barracks." On Sept. 6, 1900, Fagen was promoted to captain by Gen. Jose Alejandrino, who commanded the guerrillas in Fagen's area of operations. Fagen's men thought so highly of him, they called him "General."

From August 1900 to January 1901, Fagen fought with his former comrades at least eight times. In one attack, he and the 150 soldiers he led captured a steam launch on a river near Arayat. They had partially unloaded its military cargo when U.S. troops appeared. Fagen then escaped into the jungle with his men...

"American Gen. Frederick Funston, the Army's leading guerrilla chaser, was foiled time and again in his attempts to capture Fagen, and even taunted by the Black "general" in notes he left behind...

U.S. authorities offered a reward for the capture of "the mad dog" Fagen, and in late 1901 a Filipino hunter brought in what he said was Fagen's head. The evidence was inconclusive, though, and there is speculation that Fagen lived to a ripe old age in the jungles of Luzon with his Filipino wife...

Source: "Monkey Business, Past And Present," an article written by Clinton Cox, which appeared in the March 6-12 edition of THE CITY SUN newspaper in Brooklyn, N.Y.

African Presence In Mexico

As far as your questions about Africans in Mexico, they are believed to be descendants of colonial slaves (during Spanish rule) and Caribbean laborers imported for railroad, agricultural and mining work. A large number of U.S. slaves, however, came to Mexico after slavery was abolished there in

-Cont. on page 13-

EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME is the monthly newsletter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(Nebraska State Pen chapter). Ours is a pan-Africanist publication, meaning that we view all people of African descent as one African people, having certain basic interests in common. Also, the HARAMBEE FLAME attempts to be Africentric, in that, through study of the history, cultures, and traditional values of African people, we seek to have and cultivate an African way of looking at things.

The main purposes of the HARAMBEE FLAME are to stimulate and inform. We list "stimulate" first because, more than anything else, we want our readers to be moved to question their/your own ideas, lives, and the circumstances in which we live and to challenge those things that must be challenged in order for us to move from a condition of mental and spiritual servitude and physical dependence upon Caucasian institutions to a state of collective self-determination. Toward this purpose, we present commentaries, poems, etc. These do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization.

The HARAMBEE FLAME provides information because wise people want to know what's going on and because certain kinds of information can stimulate the mind, inspire people to want to act, and influence them to pursue proper understanding so that the actions they take will be as effective as possible. The main vehicle we use to provide information is our "From Other Sources" feature in which we make an effort to provide news about the problems we African people are confronted by and the steps we are taking to resolve them. In this feature, we try to provide coverage of the activities of African people and developments affecting us in the U.S., the nations of Africa, and elsewhere. In "Commentary," we offer analysis of and views about current events and developments.

We encourage you to send your comments, essays, poems, etc. to HARAMBEE FLAME; Harambee Afrikan Cultural Org.;; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE.; 68542-2500.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

Welfare To Workfare: A New York Experience

Since President Clinton signed the federal welfare reform legislation, New York City is now required to get 60,000 welfare recipients into workfare in a year. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who already slashed New York's unionized municipal workforce a few years ago, has taken advantage of these newfound laborers by putting them to work cleaning parks, collecting trash, working in hospitals and performing clerical duties. WEP[Work Experience Program] is New York's version of workfare, a generic name given to programs that require welfare recipients to work on city projects in return for receiving public assistance...

"Giuliani has cut city budget expenses by using cheap WEP labor to perform city services, meaning that the ranks of decently paid municipal workers get trimmed. As the city's unions looked the other way, WEP workers found themselves placed into positions that city government workers used to fill. Obligated to work 26 hours a week for as little as \$34.25 in cash and \$30 in food stamps, many WEP workers came to resent the fact that the unionized worker standing next to them was getting sick leave, vacation pay and a minimum of \$10 an hour.

"Now, the city's union workers are starting to resent WEP workers as well...

"WEP workers have been assigned to the Sanitation and Parks Departments(at last count, more than 6,000 WEP workers clean the parks) and to the city hospital system, where 1,6000 union workers have been laid off. According to union leaders like Hill[Stanley Hill, executive director of the 120,000-member District Council 37] and Arthur Cheliotos, president of the Communications Workers of America, WEP workers are being brought in to fill the vacancies. In November 1996, the city's Metropolitan Transportation Authority(MTA) reached an agreement with the Transport Workers Union to allow 500 cleaning jobs to be cut through attrition, but the MTA continues to use thousands of welfare recipients to clean buses and subways. According to New York state law, WEP workers cannot be assigned work ordinarily done by government employees...

-from "Welfare/Warfare," pages 10-13, 27; Jan./Feb.
THIRD FORCE(Oakland, CA.)

On The Ebonics Question

"'This past week gave us a very clear indication of the power of the media', Oakland Superintendent Carolyn Gettridge told the Final Call. 'The fact that all across America people did not understand the goals and intent of the board can be directly linked to the message that was portrayed in the media. I want to be clear that we are not teaching Ebonics...our goal is that every student in our school district speaks, reads, and writes proficiently in English'...

"Black students in Oakland account for 53 percent of the district's population, and 71 percent of them are in Special Education classes. These grim statistics prompted board member Cook to request that a task force review data of Black students and make recommendations for improvement. The panel, which is comprised of 30 Black professors, clergy and parents concluded English language development is at the core of success in all fields of study. Their findings were brought before the board which voted unanimously to enhance the standard English proficiency program by using Ebonics as a starting point.

"The word Ebonics(a combination of ebony and phonics which means Black sounds) was coined by author and professor Molefi Asante of Temple University. The word describes the grammatical structure of Black American speech which linguists have traced to West African language...

"'Educators need to accept the mother tongue of their students. It's a standard practice of teaching people another language to use the language they have in order to gain understanding of the one they don't have. I only gets complicated here because you have race involved', Geneva Smitherman, a distinguished English professor at Michigan State University, told The Final Call. Prof. Smitherman is the author of 'Black Talk', an Ebonics dictionary which lists the meaning of several words unique to Black Americans as well as explains the grammatical structure of its speech.

Although she acknowledges some of the speech is tied to economics, Ebonics is an Africanized English system, she said..."

-from "Teaching Black Talk,"? pages 3 and 8, Jan. 7 THE FINAL CALL(Chicago, IL.)

Hair-Braiders In New York City Challenge Regulatory Obstacles

"Two prospective African-style hair braiders were in court Monday, vigorously protesting a New York requirement that they complete a 900-hour curriculum before receiving a state license to operate..."

"The plaintiffs, Andrean Russell and Bonnie Best,...are being represented by Mark W. Smith, a Manhattan-based attorney.

"State requirements also include that the plaintiffs complete 200 hours of hair-cutting training even though braiders do not cut hair..."

"In addition, they are required to take 12 hours of training in how to shave faces even though braiders never shave faces, and 36 hours of business practices and job skills in subjects such as resume writing, advertising, industry trade shows and job attitude..."

"African-style hair braiding originated on the African continent over 5,000 years ago and was brought by African slaves into the United States, where it has endured as a distinct and popular form of hair styling and hair care..."

"Over the years, African-style hair braiding has enabled its practitioners to earn an honest living while engaging in a rich tradition of cultural expression rooted in thousands of years of African history..."

"Meanwhile, the attorney for the plaintiffs said his clients have no objection to state regulation so long as the laws are rationally related to protecting legitimate public health and safety concerns..."

-from "Lawyers For African-style Hair Braiders New Law

Unconstitutional," page 4, Jan. 11 N.Y. AMSTERDAM NEWS
(N.Y., N.Y.)

Prisons Ahead, Schools Behind

..."In 1995, for the first time, Californians paid as much for their prison system as they did for public colleges and universities...

"In Waseca, Minnesota, the state university closed its branch campus in 1992. City officials successfully lobbied the federal Bureau of Prisons to turn the campus into a minimum security prison, and it was reopened with the first shipment of prisoners in June of 1996. The town of Yankton, South Dakota, similarly bought a closed college campus and sold it to the Bureau of Prisons, which remodeled it as another minimum security prison...

"Educational programs for adult prisoners are decreasing as the prison population grows. Congress cut off prisoners' access to grants for college education in 1994. State prison education funding decreased in 1993-94 from the year before.

"Last spring, the Educational Testing Service reported that the most common finding of 20 years of research is that prisoners who have participated in education programs are more likely to be employed and less likely to end up back in prison than nonparticipants..."

-from "Schools To Prisons," pages 1 and 2, Jan. COALITION FOR PRISONERS RIGHTS Newsletter(Santa Fe, N.M.)

African Town In North Carolina May Lose Charter

"Princeville, population 2500, is 95 percent Black. It is located in 60 percent Black majority Edgecombe County. Built by freed slaves after the Civil War in 1885, Princeville became one of the first cities in the country organized by African Americans. It created a basis for a margin of political power and self-determination for Black people in Eastern North Carolina during the Post Reconstruction Period--a time when Southern white racism regained power and denied basic rights to African Americans.

The town established a public school, a main church, small businesses and other community organization.

"White supremacists used fraud and intimidation to keep Blacks in Princeville from voting and setting up social institutions and services...

"Princeville's immediate problems are centered around the town manager, Charles Tillman an African American. He does not live in Princeville, he resides in the city of Durham, 80 miles away...Two weeks after he became town manager in mid 1995, the 16 town employees walk off the job and held a picket, because of Tillman's abrasive and dictatorial management style. Most quit or were fired by Tillman, including 4 or the 5 police officers.

"Tillman replaced Black heads of public works, public safety and taxes with white department heads. None live in Princeville...Tillman has a long and shady work history, including being sued by public housing tenants in Concord, NC for violations of federal housing laws. He was arrested in September for insurance fraud in connection with his duties as Princeville town manager...

"Tillman is only part of the problem in Princeville...The Edgecombe Co. economic white power structure, base mainly in the city of Tarboro, neighboring Princeville, is a major cause for many of Princeville's problems.

"Tarboro, which controls the area's major water and sewerage systems that serve Princeville, has threatened to cut off Princeville's water service because of an overdue bill of \$18,000. A loan to repair faulty wastewater stations is being held up, because the state Department of Environmental Management isn't convinced that Princeville can repay it. Princeville's electricity was also threatened with cut-off.

"Under North Carolina State law, a town charter can only be revoked by the General Assembly. Linwood Mercer, a Democratic State Representative for the district that includes Princeville, states that this is 'unlikely'. But the attacks on Black majority political districts throughout the South...

say otherwise.

"In fact, Princeville exists within Congressional District 1, which is one of the two Black majority districts under attack in N.C. The N.C. attacks were used to set the political and legal tone for the Supreme Court rulings that led to the dismantling of the Georgia congressional district that was represented by Cynthia McKinney..."

-from "Princeville, NC Faces Serious Political And Economic Problems, Is Possibly On The Verge Of Losing Its Charter And Being Dismantled As A Town"; pages 4, 5, and 7; Jan. JUSTICE SPEAKS(Raleigh, N.C.)

Africans In UK Not Heeding The Call To Become Cops

"Sir Paul Condon, the commissioner of London Metropolitan Police, the United Kingdom's largest police force, when at a London phone-in program made a 'sincere' appeal to Blacks to join the police force..."

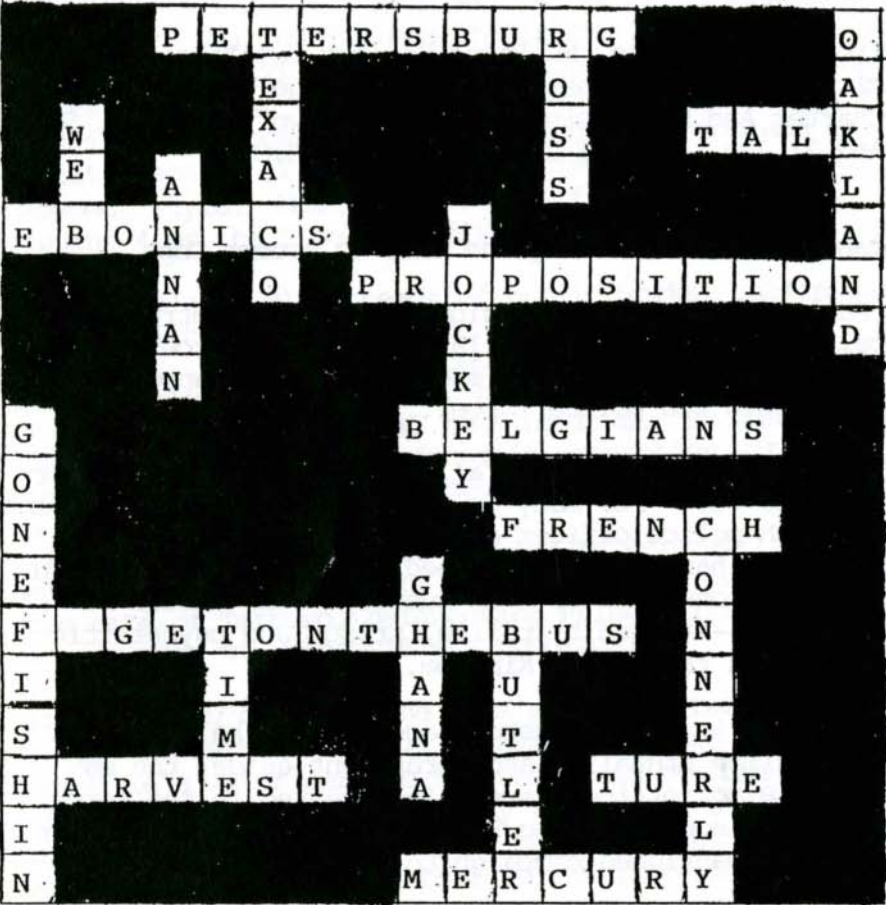
"But, so far his appeal has fallen on deaf ears. And for good reasons too. For many in the Black community the sight of a British police officer often conjures up an image of brutality and harassment,...Indeed, since 1969, more than 100 Black Britons have died in custody--some called it Gestapo camps--managed by police, prison and psychiatric authorities in the United Kingdom.

"Black deaths in police custody account for half of this figure. Police brutality and harassment aside, the way and manner Black officers are being treated in the force is another reason why young Blacks are giving thumbs down to the afore-mentioned campaign to firm up the number of Black recruits.

"At the moment there are some 600 non-white officers in the London Metropolitan Police, out of a total workforce of 28,000. In the United Kingdom as a whole, Blacks and ethnic minority officers constitute 1.9 percent of an estimated 100,000-man force, compared to six percent in the overall working population..."

-from "Black Bobbies," page 12, Jan. 21 THE FINAL CALL

Africentric Crossword Puzzle #13 Answers



Back In Time(cont.)

1829. In fact, Mexico refused to turn over these slaves, causing the biggest problem with the United States that eventually led to the U.S. conquest of a third of Mexico (for new slave territories). While more is known about the Underground Railroad north to "freedom," there was also an Underground Railroad south to Mexico. Texas was the key escape route. Even during the so-called 1836 Texas War of Independence from Mexico (so they could be "independent" to own slaves), escaped slaves joined with the Mexican armies against the Texans. Estimates about how many came over are sketchy--they range from several hundred to hundreds of thousands.

Most of the escaped slaves mixed into the Mexican culture fairly rapidly. It is believed that almost every Mexican has traces of African blood because of this mixture. In addition, there are still communities founded by escaped slaves that have maintained large numbers of African peoples. Such a place is the town of Cuajinicuilapa--Cuijla for short--which is located on the mountainous coast between Guerrero and Oaxaca. These former slaves resisted all attempts at recapture, turning against the Spanish authorities as well as the indigenous populations. Thus they did not mix very well, and as late as 1950 were still building conical-roof homes--as in West Africa--and the women walked around bare-chested.

Other areas with clear African ties are in Vera Cruz (the birthplace of LaBamba and other African-based rhythms). Even Pancho Villa was known to have African blood...

Source: a letter we received from Luis Rodriguez, a Chicano poet and community organizer in Chicago

Africans Establish Maroon Societies In The Americas

From the misty dawn of America's earliest foreign landings, Africans who broke their chains fled to the wilderness to create their own "maroon" settlements (after a Spanish word for runaways)...

In remote areas of the Americas beyond the reach of European armies many became strongly defended agricultural and trading centers bearing such names as "Disturb Me If You Dare" and "Try Me If You Be Men." ...For more than 90 years in 17th century Brazil the Republic of Palmares fought off onslaughts by Dutch and Portuguese troops. In 1719 a Brazilian colonist wrote to King Jao of Portugal of maroons: "Their self-respect grows because of the fear whites have of them."

Women played a vital role in these pioneer settlements. Often in short supply, they were sought as revered wives and mothers who would provide stability, the nourishment of family life and children, the community's future. Families meant these enclaves would strive for peace, but that their soldiers would fight invading slave-catching armies to the death.

Two women rule maroon settlements in colonial Brazil. Fillipa Maria Aranha governed a colony in Amazonia where her military prowess convinced Portuguese officials it was wiser to negotiate than try to defeat her armies. A treaty granted Aranha's people independence, liberty and sovereignty. In Passanha, an unnamed African woman hurled her Malali Indian and African guerrilla troops against European soldiers.

Source: THE BLACK WEST by William Loren Katz

Biko Speaks On The Coming Of Christianity To "So. Africa"

They[missionaries] were in the vanguard of the colonisation movement to "civilise and educate" the savages and introduce the Christian message to them. The religion they brought was quite foreign to the black indigenous people. African religion in its essence was not radically different from Christianity. We also believed in one God, we had our own community of saints through whom we related to our God, and we did not find it compatible with our way of life to worship God in isolation from the various aspects of our lives. Hence worship was not a specialised function

that found expression once a week in a secluded building, but rather it featured in our wars, our beer-drinking, our dances and our customs in general. Whenever Africans drank they would first relate to God by giving a portion of their beer away as a token of thanks. When anything went wrong at home they would offer sacrifice to God to appease him and atone for their sins. There was no hell in our religion. We believed in the inherent goodness of man--hence we took it for granted that all people at death joined the community of saints and therefore merited our respect.

It was the missionaries who confused the people with their new religion. They scared our people with stories of hell. They painted their God as a demanding God who wanted worship "or else." People had to discard their clothes and their customs in order to be accepted in this new religion. Knowing how religious the African people were, the missionaries stepped up their terror campaign on the emotions of the people with their detailed accounts of eternal burning, tearing of hair and gnashing of teeth. By some strange and twisted logic, they argued that theirs was a scientific religion and ours a superstition--all this in spite of the biological discrepancy which is at the base of their religion. This cold and cruel religion was strange to the indigenous people and caused frequent strife between the converted and the "pagans," the former, having imbibed the false values from white society, were taught to ridicule and despise those who defended the truth of their indigenous religion. With the ultimate acceptance of the western religion down went our cultural values!

Source: Steve Biko's I WRITE WHAT I LIKE

A Griot Tells Of His Duties

I am a griot. It is I, Djeli Mamoudou Kouyate, son of Bintou Kouyate and Djeli Kedian Kouyate, master in the art of eloquence. Since time immemorial the Kouyates have been in the service of the Keita princes of Mali; we are vessels of speech, we are the repositories which harbor secrets many centuries old. The art of eloquence has no secrets for us; without us the names of kings would vanish

into oblivion, we are the memory of mankind; by the spoken word we bring to life the deeds and exploits of kings for younger generations.

I derive my knowledge from my father, Djeli Kedian, who also got it from his father; history holds no mystery for us; we teach to the vulgar just as much as we want to teach them, for it is we who keep the keys to the twelve doors of Mali[i.e., the twelve provinces of which Mali was originally composed].

I know the list of all the sovereigns who succeeded to the throne of Mali. I know how the black people divided into tribes, for my father bequeathed to me all his learning; I know why such and such is called Kamara, another Keita, and yet another Sibibe or Traore; every name has a meaning, a secret import.

I teach kings the history of their ancestors so that the lives of the ancients might serve them as an example, for the world is old, but the future springs from the past.

Source: THROUGH AFRICAN EYES: CULTURES IN CHANGE, Volume III, edited by Leon E. Clark



